

it does, then she might just stop talking altogether at a meeting, and there would be a chilling effect on democracy.

That chilling effect is a very bad thing for democracies. In other words, it should never happen in the first place. So it is critically important for the Attorney General to make very clear to everybody that, short of violence and making true threats of violence, the Federal Government will have nothing to do with the crowds and the comments that people make at a school board meeting.

All of my Republican colleagues on the Senate Judiciary Committee and I sent a letter to the Attorney General telling him just that. He should make clear to all Americans that, unless there is physical violence or a threat of physical violence, Federal law enforcement has nothing to do with local school board meetings; and he ought to take into consideration the capability of local law enforcement to take care of it in the first place.

BIOFUELS

Madam President, on another subject, I would like to speak to an issue that is hurting the pocketbooks of hard-working Americans, particularly in the State of Iowa.

The media has reported that the White House has been in discussions with Big Oil regarding rising fuel prices. This is quite a surprise to some of us who have heard nothing from the administration all year; that we have got to stop fossil fuels and we have got to worry more about global warming. We shouldn't stop Big Oil, but you still have got to worry about global warming.

President Biden has called on OPEC cartels to drill for additional crude oil and discussed potentially opening up our domestic Strategic Petroleum Reserve. With rising energy prices, it is commonsense to promote additional development of energy; but with the Biden administration's sole focus seemingly being on climate change, I would think more attention would be paid to promoting an emphasis upon clean energy.

Throughout my tenure in the Senate, I have promoted alternative energy sources as a way of protecting our environment and increasing our energy independence. As the No. 1 producer of corn, ethanol, and biodiesel, Iowa leads the Nation's renewable fuels industry.

But if the President doesn't care about Iowa—my State of Iowa—the President should remember the States of Illinois and Minnesota, just as an example. Historically, blue States are also major producers of corn and soybeans, as well as ethanol and biodiesel.

A recent study has shown the expanded use of ethanol under the renewable fuel standard has lowered gasoline prices by an average of 22 cents per gallon. This saves the typical American household \$250 annually. In recent weeks, E-10, which is a 10-percent mixture of ethanol and gasoline, has sold

for 35 cents to 50 cents per gallon less than gasoline with no ethanol.

Not only is ethanol-blended gas cheaper than non-ethanol gasoline, but a recent study has also shown that ethanol reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 43 percent compared to conventional gasoline.

Considering President Biden's sudden interest in high gasoline prices, a commonsense solution would be to turn to the biofuel industry for assistance in this time of high gasoline prices.

Enhancing energy security while lowering emissions was the exact reason why Congress created the renewable fuel standard in 2005 and 2007. The Midwest has the potential to provide a solution to the multifaceted problems that this administration faces.

Instead, President Biden and his White House continue—it seems to me—to turn to Big Oil to solve the energy crisis instead of looking at the renewable fuels opportunities. Big Oil seems to then have a friendly relationship with the White House, which is completely contrary to what you would think of when they want to do away with fossil fuels.

Recent rumors in the press are saying that the administration is considering gutting the renewable fuel standard with massive cuts to the required volume obligations. This is strange considering President Biden campaigned on supporting the renewable fuel standard. He campaigned in Iowa as a friend of ethanol—yes, in Iowa.

President Biden said that “the Renewable Fuel Standard marks our bond with our farmers and our commitment to a thriving rural economy.”

Increased drilling for crude oil and increasing our dependence on OPEC is not a solution to higher prices at the pumps.

Why ask OPEC to pump more oil? Why ask Big Oil to pump more oil?

Americans need relief, and that relief can come from having a partnership with the biofuels industry, and it is past time for the administration to look to the heartland instead of Texas and OPEC for an answer.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

REMEMBERING COLIN POWELL

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I begin today with the news that General Colin Powell, who served our Nation as the first African-American Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the first African-American Secretary of State, passed away this morning at 84.

General Powell leaves behind a distinguished trailblazing legacy. Born in

Harlem to Jamaican parents, he grew up with a sister and his parents in South Bronx. He graduated from Melrose High School in the Bronx in 1954. At City College, his life changed forever when he joined the school's ROTC program, quickly becoming a standout member and earning his commission as Second Lieutenant in the Army after graduation.

From humble beginnings, General Powell's career broke one glass ceiling after another. His life was a manifestation of the American dream, a true American success story.

I join all Americans in remembering General Powell's life and his dedication to the country we love.

My thoughts are with his wife Alma, his three children, and his entire family.

SENATE AGENDA

Madam President, we begin a consequential work period for the U.S. Senate. Later today, we are going to move forward on the nomination of Gustavo Gelpi to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

If confirmed today, I believe Judge Gelpi will be only the second American citizen from Puerto Rico to be appointed to that court in its history. I cannot think of a better individual to succeed the late Judge Torruella.

Judge Gelpi is a proven champion of civil rights and a defender of the rule of law. He began his career in Puerto Rico's office as a Federal defender. In 2006, he was unanimously confirmed as a district judge for Puerto Rico.

He brings both personal and professional diversity to the bench at a time when we desperately need both. I am proud to have championed his nomination, and look forward to his confirmation today.

VOTING RIGHTS

Madam President, on voting rights, this week, the Senate will have an opportunity to engage in a momentous and urgent debate protecting the right to vote in free and fair elections.

Later this evening, I will begin the process for the Senate to consider the Freedom to Vote Act, a powerful new bill designed to fortify our democracy, protect the vote, and renew the American people's trust in our elections. After I file cloture tonight on the motion to proceed, Members can expect the vote to take place on Wednesday.

The Freedom to Vote Act is a balanced, effective, and commonsense bill. It sets basic standards for all Americans to vote safely and securely, while protecting elections from subversion. It fights back against the power of Big Money and ends partisan gerrymandering, while respecting the role of States in carrying out elections.

The bill represents the first time every single Senate Democrat has united on voting rights legislation. It is a strong bill. It advances election reforms proven to work in red, blue, and purple States across the country.

I thank my colleagues—all of my colleagues—for the work in putting this